

AN ACT

IN THE COUNCIL OF THE DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA

*Codification
District of
Columbia
Official Code*

2001 Edition

2008 Winter
Supp.

West Group
Publisher

To establish the Housing Support for Teachers Program and the Housing Support for Teachers Fund to provide housing assistance for selected teachers certified in the critical shortage fields of mathematics, science, and special education in return for a 5-year commitment to teach in the critical shortage fields in a District of Columbia public or charter school.

BE IT ENACTED BY THE COUNCIL OF THE DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA, That this act may be cited as the “Housing Support for Teachers Act of 2007”.

Sec. 2. Definitions.

For the purposes of this act, the term:

(1) “Critical shortage fields” means the teaching subject areas of mathematics, sciences, and special education.

(2) “Fund” means the Housing Support for Teachers Fund, established by section 7.

(3) “OSSE” means the Office of the State Superintendent of Education, established by section 2 of the State Education Office Establishment Act of 2000, effective October 21, 2000 (D.C. Law 13-176; D.C. Official Code § 38-2601).

(4) “Participant” means a person who has applied to the Program and who has met the eligibility requirements set forth in this act and who has been selected by the Superintendent to participate in the Program.

(5) “Program” means the Housing Support for Teachers Program, established by section 3.

(6) “Relocation expenses” means expenses incurred by applicants in moving to the District to participate in the Program that are limited to moving costs associated with hiring professional movers, storage fees, and transportation costs, but not including hotel stays.

(7) “Superintendent” means the State Superintendent of Education.

Sec. 3. Establishment of the Housing Support for Teachers Program.

(a) There is established within the OSSE the Housing Support for Teachers Program. The purpose of the Program is to provide housing-related financial assistance to District of

Columbia teachers certified to teach within the critical shortage fields within the District.

(b) The Program shall provide the following support to Participants:

(1) A one-time grant of up to \$5,000 awarded to Participants who are District residents at the time of application, or non-residents who will become residents of the District by the time their employment begins, which may be used for the following purposes:

- (A) Relocation expenses;
- (B) Downpayment or closing costs on the purchase of a home;
- (C) Initial fees associated with rentals (including broker fees, security deposits, and first-month's rent); and
- (D) Mortgage or rental payments;

(2) An additional one-time grant of up to \$5,000 for Participants who can establish proof of District residency for the last 5 years at the time of application, to be used for the following purposes:

- (A) Downpayment or closing costs on the purchase of a home;
- (B) Initial fees associated with rentals (such as broker fees and security deposits); and
- (C) Mortgage or rental payments; and

(3) A monthly housing stipend of \$400 per month to be dispersed to every Participant during the first 2 years of the 5-year commitment period.

(c) Awards made through the Program shall be limited to 100 new Participants per fiscal year.

Sec. 4. Eligibility to participate in the Program.

(a) A person may apply to the Program if the person meets the following criteria:

(1) Is a licensed District of Columbia public school or public charter school teacher or currently holds a teaching license from another state and qualifies for reciprocity for a District of Columbia teaching license through the OSSE;

(2) Possesses 2 or more accumulated years of full-time teaching experience, either in their previous careers or currently; and

(3) Is currently teaching or has applied and received an offer for a teaching position in a District of Columbia public school or public charter school in one of the critical shortage fields.

(b) The Superintendent may reduce to one year the number of years needed to meet the requirements of subsection (a)(2) of this section if the Superintendent determines that exceptional circumstance warrant the reduction.

Sec. 5. Commitment period, service agreement, and penalties.

(a) In exchange for the housing assistance provided by this act, a Participant shall be required to enter into a service agreement that requires the Participant to commit to teach in a District of Columbia public school or public charter school in one of the critical shortage fields

and maintain residency in the District for a minimum of 5 years. All of the Program requirements shall be detailed in the service agreement entered into between the Participant and the OSSE.

(b) The OSSE shall monitor each Participant's performance for compliance with the service agreement.

(c) Participants whose circumstances change during the 5-year service commitment period may apply to the Superintendent for a release from the 5-year service commitment because of a medical or other severe hardship.

(d) A Participant who fails to satisfy the terms of the service agreement and is not released from the 5-year service commitment period by the Superintendent shall repay all monies received under the Program.

Sec. 6. Selection of Program Participants.

(a) The Superintendent shall select Participants from the pool of persons eligible under section 4 based on the following criteria:

- (1) Demonstrated ability to improve student achievement in their subject area;
- (2) Possession of strong instructional knowledge and content expertise;
- (3) Commitment to supporting the academic achievement of all students;
- (4) Commitment to continuous self-learning and improvement of instructional practice; and
- (5) Possession of strong communication skills.

(b) The Superintendent shall thoroughly investigate all references provided by the Participant and validate that the Participant has met the eligibility requirements of section 4.

(c) The Superintendent shall verify that the Participant is certified in the critical shortage field for which the Participant has declared and that the Participant is teaching or will teach in a subject area that requires that expertise.

Sec. 7. Housing Support for Teachers Fund.

(a) There is established as a nonlapsing fund the Housing Support for Teachers Fund. The Chief Financial Officer shall pay into the Fund all receipts from those fees and taxes specifically identified by any provision of District of Columbia law to be paid into the Fund, any federal grant, any other federal funds that may be used for the purposes of the Fund, and all funds required to be repaid by Participants pursuant to section 5(d).

(b) The Fund shall be used to pay the costs of the financial support provided by the Program as enumerated by section 3(b) and to cover any administrative costs associated with the Program.

(c) All funds deposited into the Fund, and any interest earned thereon, shall not revert to the unrestricted fund balance of the General Fund of the District of Columbia at the end of a fiscal year, or at any other time, but shall be continually available for the uses and purposes set forth in subsection (b) of this section without regard to fiscal year limitation, subject to

authorization by Congress.

Sec. 8. Responsibilities of the OSSE.

The OSSE shall be responsible for the following:

- (1) Administering the grants and monthly stipends to all Participants;
- (2) Collecting all repayments to the Fund by Participants pursuant to section 5(d);
- (3) Periodically reviewing Fund revenue sources to determine what additional revenue sources may be required to assure the continuation of the Fund and the Program and requesting Council action to access revenue sources otherwise unavailable to the Fund;
- (4) Filing with the Chairperson of the Council Committee on Housing and Urban Affairs semiannual reports on activities and expenditures;
- (5) Providing additional homeownership assistance to Participants, including homeownership counseling and assistance in accessing financial resources from sources outside of the Program; and
- (6) Providing general information and technical assistance regarding affordable rental housing within the District.

Sec. 9. Rules.

(a) The Mayor, pursuant to Title 1 of the District of Columbia Administrative Procedure Act, approved October 21, 1968 (82 Stat. 1204; D.C. Official Code 2-502 *et seq.*), shall issue rules within 90 days after the effective date of this act to implement the provisions of this act.

(b) The rules shall include the following:

- (1) An application procedure for the Program;
- (2) Standards for eligibility and selection of Participants that shall include the criteria described in sections 4, 5, and 6;
- (3) The provisions of the service agreements, which include the terms described in section 5.

(c) The proposed rules shall be submitted to the Council for a 45-day period of review, excluding Saturdays, Sundays, legal holidays, and days of Council recess. If the Council does not approve or disapprove the proposed rules, in whole or in part, by resolution within the 45-day review period, the proposed rules shall be deemed approved.

Sec. 10. Availability of funds.

This act shall be subject to the availability of funds in a Congressional appropriations act.

Sec. 11. Fiscal impact statement.

The Council adopts the fiscal impact statement of the Chief Financial Officer as the fiscal impact statement required by section 602(c)(3) of the District of Columbia Home Rule Act, approved December 24, 1973 (87 Stat. 813; D.C. Official Code § 1-206.02(c)(3)).

Sec. 12. Effective date.

This act shall take effect following approval by the Mayor (or in the event of veto by the Mayor, action by the Council to override the veto), a 30-day period of Congressional review as provided in section 602(c)(1) of the District of Columbia Home Rule Act, approved December 24, 1973 (87 Stat. 813; D.C. Official Code § 1-206.02(c)(1)), and publication in the District of Columbia Register.

Chairman
Council of the District of Columbia

Mayor
District of Columbia